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Letter dated 5 October 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour of transmitting to you the summary report of the First Meeting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development, which took place in Brussels, from 9 to 11 July 2007 (see annex).

The idea of the Global Forum on Migration and Development was proposed by the United Nations Secretary-General and his Special Representative for Migration at the United Nations High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development in September 2006. The First Meeting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development was organized by the Government of Belgium in consultation with the Special Representative for Migration of the United Nations Secretary-General and an open-ended group of United Nations Member States.

During the Governmental meeting of 10 and 11 July 2007, more than 800 delegates from 156 United Nations Member States and more than 20 international organizations as well as the European Commission and an observer State participated in two plenary sessions and 12 round-table sessions running parallel on specific issues. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat established a virtual Marketplace to enable countries to "market" their migration/development-related needs and find partners to meet those needs.

Some 200 participants from the civil society attended the Civil Society Day organized by the King Baudoin Foundation on 9 July.

The interactive exchanges during the Governmental meeting resulted in a number of conclusions and recommendations leading to short-, medium- and long-term actions for consideration by the Governments.

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 56.

(*Signed*) Johan **Verbeke**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 5 October 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: French]

Global Forum on Migration and Development

First meeting

Brussels, 9-11 July 2007

Global Forum
MIGRATION &
DEVELOPMENT
GFMD Belgium 2007

Summary report*

* This report has been prepared by the Task Force set up by the Belgian Government for the preparation of the first meeting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development in close consultation with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. This document reflects the discussions held during the first Global Forum meeting and its related activities. It does not necessarily reflect the views of the Global Forum organizers or the governments or organizations involved in the meeting. As the Global Forum is an informal, non-binding, process, the document also does not involve any commitment from any of the parties to the Global Forum discussions. Any reproduction, partial or whole, of this document should cite the source.

1. Summary

The Global Forum on Migration and Development was established as a venue for discussing issues related to international migration and development in a systematic and comprehensive way. The idea of the Global Forum was proposed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and his Special Representative for Migration at the United Nations High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development in September 2006. There was widespread support by United Nations Member States for the Forum to be informal, voluntary and government-led, and to operate in a transparent and open manner, without producing negotiated outcomes or normative decisions.

The first meeting was initiated, prepared and organized by the Government of Belgium, in consultation with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and an open-ended group of United Nations Member States, the "Friends of the Forum", and took place in Brussels on 9-11 July 2007. The aim was to deepen understanding, through enhanced dialogue and partnerships, of the opportunities and challenges of migration for development and vice versa, and to identify practical and action-oriented ways to address and operationalize these at national, regional and global levels. It brought together Government and international expertise in this endeavour.

To bring this process to a productive end within the brief space of nine months, the Belgian Government set up an international task force under the directorship of Ambassador Régine De Clercq, who was specifically charged with the overall organization and coordination of the meeting. Although Belgium provided the bulk of financial resources required, it was necessary to obtain additional financial and human resources from a number of Governments and international partners to supplement the in-house resources. All these resources were managed under the rules and regulations applicable to the Belgian public services.

Belgium launched in November 2006 an enquiry with all United Nations Member States to define the themes to be addressed by the Global Forum and requested them to nominate a focal point, at high level, responsible for national coordination and policy coherence. One hundred and twenty-three countries responded to those requests. They played a key role in the Global Forum process.

Belgium followed a working method based on close collaboration with these country focal points and active engagement of those willing to work in teams. These teams were managed and coordinated by the task force and set up to represent cross-sectoral expertise and the views of all on the migration spectrum in a balanced way across developing and developed countries. The objective was to foster frank exchange and discussion and broad state ownership of the process. Forty-three country representatives, 12 international organizations and seven civil society representatives as well as the European Commission were engaged in these teams. Many of the international organizations became involved at the behest of the Governments preparing the sessions. The task force and the teams held multiple meetings and conference calls to complete the background papers and plan the round-table discussions. Close guidance and preparatory support were provided to the round-table chairs to ensure concrete discussion and outcomes, and to avoid lengthy theoretical speeches without real exchange of experience and ideas.

The following key conclusions can be drawn from this first meeting and its preparatory process:

- The Global Forum has established a **new approach to migration** by squarely moving development to the centre of the migration debate; and enabled a **shift of the migration and development paradigm** by promoting legal migration as an opportunity for development of both origin and destination countries, rather than as a threat.
- It paves the way for a **longer-term common global vision** on migration, based on the recognition of mutual benefits to origin and destination countries; and for restoring trust in migration systems worldwide. Nevertheless, divergent interests and situations will always preclude "one size fits all" solutions.
- It **opens the space** for migration and development policymakers to reach their respective objectives more effectively by both acknowledging and addressing the benefits and risks of migration for poor people and developing countries.
- It has shown that **sharing responsibilities between developed and developing countries** can make migration work better for development and vice versa; and that development can lead to migration by choice and not by necessity.
- It provides a **platform for discussing experiences, innovations and good practices**, and for identifying concrete ways of ensuring the positive contribution of legal migration to development (see more details in the round-table reports).
- It has created, through the country **focal points**, a vehicle for greater coherence and a more comprehensive approach towards migration, development and other policies at national level. As pointed out by the Global Commission on International Migration, this can lead to more coherence in these areas at the international level.

The first nine months of the Global Forum process have also set in place a structuring framework — in regard to the content and the process — for addressing migration and development issues at the global level. This framework provides the basis for actively following up the outcomes of the first meeting and reporting on their progress at the next Global Forum meeting. It comprises:

- A **global survey**, launched in November 2006, in which Governments defined thematic priorities to be addressed by the Forum;
- In the meantime, a global network of more than 150 national **focal points**, acting across ministries and Government departments and maintaining the link with the Global Forum, as well as focal points appointed within international organizations;
- The **Friends of the Forum**, a consultative body open to all United Nations Member States, which acts as a sounding board for the Global Forum process and advises the Chair-in-Office on the agenda, structure and format of each Forum meeting;
- The **creation of teams** between Governments, international organizations and civil society around themes of mutual interest. Some of these are likely to continue working on issues in future meetings;

• **Operating modalities** for continuation of the Forum, including its link with the United Nations and the beginning of a support structure (see annex).

This first meeting of the Global Forum was hailed by many participants as a landmark in the migration and development debate. Participants, however, also stressed that, while development may have moved centre stage in the migration debate, development aid should not be used for the regulation of migration flows; nor should migration be seen as an alternative to national development strategies, or the money flows generated by migrants as a substitute for official development assistance.

A special tribute should be paid to the many Governments, international organizations, academics and other civil society actors who contributed financial and human resources, and those who invested time and resources in the background papers and the planning of the sessions, to help make this first Global Forum meeting a success. We would also like to thank the King Baudouin Foundation for ably organizing the civil society consultations, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for his support and contributions throughout the process.

The first meeting of the Global Forum comprised two interrelated parts:

• **Civil Society Day (9 July)**

At the request of the Belgian Government, the King Baudouin Foundation organized, on 9 July, consultations among civil society entities, which brought together more than 200 representatives of NGOs, diaspora organizations, the private sector, universities and trade unions from throughout the world to discuss the issues on the agenda of the governmental days. A report on this meeting was presented in the plenary session of the governmental meeting.[1]

• **Governmental meeting (10-11 July)**

During the governmental meeting of 10-11 July more than 800 delegates — representing **156 United Nations Member States and more than 20 international organizations** as well as the European Commission and the Holy See — participated in two plenary sessions and 12 round-table sessions running in parallel on specific issues related to human capital development and labour mobility (Round table 1), remittances and other diaspora resources (Round table 2) and policy and institutional coherence (Round table 3).[2] Each session was prepared and presented by voluntary teams of Governments with common interests in the theme, and representing the developing and developed regions of the world in a balanced way. The round tables yielded concrete project proposals ranging from working groups to feasibility studies, which will need to be implemented and reported on at the next Global Forum meeting by willing Governments and/or relevant international organizations.

During the round-table sessions, **the cross-cutting issues of root causes of migration, human rights and gender**, which had been identified by some Governments as crucial for the migration-development debate, were examined in a horizontal way. Some recommendations were made to help Governments better integrate these into their future respective policymaking.

[1] For more information on the Civil Society Day, see http://www.gfmd-civil-society.org.

[2] For more information on the Global Forum meeting, see http://www.gfmd-fmmd.org.

Present at the opening session were **HRH Prince Philippe of Belgium**, representing **His Majesty King Albert II, Mr. Guy Verhofstadt**, Prime Minister of Belgium and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, **H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon**. The meeting was chaired by the Belgian Executive Director of the Global Forum, **Ambassador Régine De Clercq**. In his address, Mr. Guy Verhofstadt, Prime Minister of Belgium, emphasized the importance of development for sound migration policies. The Secretary-General of the United Nations, H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, observed that the lead-up to the Global Forum offered a basis for a less politicized discussion about migration.

The keynote speech was delivered by **H.E. Mr. José Manuel Barroso**, President of the European Commission. Other speakers were **H.E. Mr. Couaovi A. L. Johnson**, Secretary General of the Commission of the African Union, **H.E. Sir John Kaputin**, Secretary-General of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States and **Professor Ernesto Zedillo**, former President of Mexico, who pointed to the links between the Global Forum discussion and broader international policy debates, such as trade and development, and to the consequences that the failure of the Doha Round would have for international migration.

At the closing session of the meeting of the Global Forum, reports on the three round tables and the horizontal issues were presented by **Mrs. Patricia Sto. Tomas**, Chairwoman of the Development Bank of the Philippines and former Secretary of Labour, the Philippines (Round table 1); **H.E. Professor Oumar Hammadoun Dicko**, Minister for Malians Abroad and African Integration, Mali (Round table 2); **Mr. Richard Manning**, Chair of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (Round table 3) and **Mr. Jozef De Witte**, Director General of the Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism, Belgium (Horizontal issues). In his closing remarks, the **Hon. Arturo D. Brion**, Secretary of Labour, the Philippines, described the meeting as a milestone in world history and urged Governments to continue the existing consultative mechanisms and the informal discussions towards more firm commitments, partnerships and international cooperation. In the final conclusions and recommendations of the Chair, **Ambassador Régine De Clercq** spelled out how the achievements of this first meeting could be taken forward in a productive and coordinated manner.

In conjunction with the Forum meeting and its preparation, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs established a virtual **Marketplace** to enable countries to "market" their migration/development-related needs and find partners to help meet those needs. This led to a considerable number of meetings between interested parties during the July meeting and possible follow-up projects. The Marketplace will continue as part of the Forum, and cooperation will likely be pursued after Brussels to the Manila meeting and beyond.

2. The Civil Society Day (9 July)

The first day of the Global Forum meeting was devoted to discussions among civil society actors on migration and development issues; it offered input into the governmental discussions on 10 and 11 July. The agenda largely mirrored the governmental agenda (human capital and labour mobility; remittances and diaspora; institutional and policy coherence) and was organized in eight sessions.

It was stressed during the meeting that migration by itself would not bring about development. The structural barriers to development cannot be overcome without responsible governmental actions in countries of origin and destination. Without a major change in course, migrants and their contributions will not fulfil effectively their potential role as partners in the articulation and implementation of inclusive, equitable and sustainable development policies. Non-State actors also have an important role to play in working towards this change.

Participants expressed a clear commitment to pursue this process in the years to come. Joint projects in this area and practical partnerships resulting from the increased cooperation achieved through the Forum will keep the global human development of migrants at the core of their actions.[3]

3. The governmental meeting (10-11 July)

The discussion within the three thematic round tables of the governmental meeting focused on (i) human capital development and labour mobility, (ii) remittances and other diaspora resources, and (iii) enhancing institutional and policy coherence and promoting partnerships. Cross-cutting aspects relating to gender, human rights and root causes of migration were examined in a horizontal manner in the sessions.

The interactive exchanges resulted in a number of recommendations leading to short-, medium- and longer-term actions. While some are in the realm of national policy and can be unilaterally implemented, others will require bilateral and/or multilateral action. Some will involve Governments at different levels, and others may need coordination and partnership with international organizations or civil society.

Participants recognized the importance of considering the appropriate support mechanisms for Governments and other actors to take these initiatives forward to the next meeting of the Global Forum.

Following is a summary of the conclusions and recommendations of the first Global Forum meeting. A full report will be produced and disseminated by the end of 2007.

3.1 Round table 1 — Human capital development and labour mobility: maximizing opportunities and minimizing risks

(Coordination: Ms. Irena Omelaniuk, Global Forum Task force)

Round table 1 discussed human capital development and labour mobility and the question of how, in the pursuit of both goals, opportunities can be maximized and risks minimized for the migrants, their families and home communities. Four areas were addressed where migration and development interface directly and where new policy approaches are emerging:

- Highly skilled migration and the fear of brain drain in developing countries;

[3] The full report of the Civil Society Day is available on http://www.gfmd-civil-society.org.

- Temporary labour migration, particularly of lower skilled persons;
- The role of the private sector and other non-State agencies in temporary labour migration; and
- Circular forms of migration and skills sharing.

Main observations and findings

Highly skilled migration is growing and likely to continue to grow, in part because of the easier access of the highly skilled to information and job opportunities abroad, but also because of a lack of opportunities at home. The movement of skilled and trained professionals can put countries of origin at risk, particularly if they have not reached their optimal development level. This is most likely in vulnerable sectors such as health and education. But migration is not the principal or only cause of weak health systems in developing countries, and policies to address skill needs are likely to work best if they are multipronged and based on partnerships. Some joint approaches are emerging both within and between origin and destination countries, also among learning and training institutions, in order to better contain brain drain and ensure brain gain. These include better human resource development and deployment policies, sectoral development, sharing of skills and training and capacity-building. However, the effectiveness of these initiatives needs to be assessed.

Temporary labour migration can be a flexible way of meeting labour surplus and shortage across countries. Assuring legal access to a varied labour market, protecting the basic rights of migrants, especially women, and assuring temporariness of the migration are key to maximizing the mutual benefits of such migration. In the absence of a functional multilateral system, bilateral arrangements have been found to operate effectively in certain countries, particularly if based on standard contracts and assured social security for migrants. Individual countries can also adopt institutional and policy frameworks that contribute to realizing the objectives of temporary migration. Joint arrangements between origin and destination countries, particularly for lower-skilled migrants, can help enforce the laws to protect temporary migrants and enhance their contribution to their families and home communities. More needs to be known about the linkages between temporary labour migration and development, and how to deal with large existing illegal migrant worker populations.

Other-than-government partners, particularly the private sector, are key drivers of global labour mobility today, yet they remain less active in ensuring that it benefits development efforts. Recruitment and other upfront migration costs can be prohibitive and severely reduce migrants' capacities to recoup their migration costs and support development efforts at home. Limited and sometimes distorted information on opportunities, rights and obligations can also make migrants vulnerable to abuse and exploitation during migration and while abroad. Few coherent programmes exist that systematically and effectively engage Government, private sector, international organizations and others in partnerships that could ensure safer, more productive labour mobility.

More *circular forms of migration and sustainable return* would enable temporary labour movements to be better linked to the skills and development needs of the source country, and to be factored into the skills requirements of the

destination country. Also, the return or circulation of skills and other assets of more permanent migrants can reinforce development efforts in origin countries. By agreement, destination countries could make their entry and work permit policies more flexible in return for commitments by origin countries to strengthen the incentives for migrants and their skills to return home, either temporarily or permanently; and to factor multisectoral training into their labour emigration planning. Some European countries in particular were exploring this more comprehensive linking of labour migration planning to development in the context of the European Commission's current broader policy thinking on mobility partnerships.

Recommendations and proposed actions

➢ Collate good policies and practices that will allow countries better to manage human resource development and deployment in highly skilled sectors, particularly the health sector, and ensure effective partnership between origin and destination countries. Gender-specific data on skilled migration should be collected. The following actions were agreed during the session:

1. Establish a **matrix of good practices** for countries of origin and destination and for joint actions between them that can help retain, train and recover skilled health personnel for development. This could be based on the Global Forum background paper and the discussions in the round table and passed on by the session chairpersons to the Global Health Workforce Alliance to inform its work in this area.

2. Consider further development of **codes of ethical recruitment** in the health sector and the dissemination of lessons learned from existing codes of conduct. The Global Health Workforce Alliance has already begun the development of a global code of conduct, and will report on the findings at the next meeting of the Global Forum in 2008.

➢ A compendium of good policies and practices for safe and orderly temporary labour migration is needed, that also enforces its legality, temporariness and potential contributions to development. This can draw from some good partnership practices between countries, presented during the session and in the background paper, and from some of the ready-made policy tools offered by international expert organizations. The following action was agreed during the session:

3. Develop a **compendium of good practice policies** on bilateral temporary labour arrangements that can contribute to development and give access to foreign labour markets, notably for the low skilled, while controlling irregular migration and protecting the human and social rights of migrants. This could be taken forward by the round-table session Chairs in collaboration with relevant international organizations and presented to a Friends of the Forum meeting in the near future.

➢ Private sector and other non-State actors should play a stronger role in reducing the costs of migration, ensuring better work conditions and informing and protecting migrants abroad. The following actions were agreed during the session:

4. **Undertake a feasibility study of financial intermediation services** that allow workers to borrow at market or if possible at concessional rates for

their upfront expenses prior to migration. Bangladesh has expressed keen interest in undertaking this study in partnership with relevant agencies, including commercial banks, and reporting on the outcomes in Manila 2008.

5. **Organize a workshop among interested Government and other partners** to discuss ways of identifying good recruitment and employment practices and set up benchmarks/criteria for performance evaluation of recruitment agents and employers in origin and destination countries. Bangladesh has shown interest in co-organizing this workshop with relevant partners and reporting on progress in Manila 2008.

6. **Establish migrant resource centres** along a well-traversed migration corridor, and interconnect these to ensure timely and linked-up services to migrants. This may be a real Migrant Resource Centre or a virtual or Internet-based one and may be considered for longer-term action.

7. Based on the **Guatemala-Canada seasonal worker model, consider developing such projects as pilots** in other countries along a well-used migration corridor. This could be taken forward by interested international organizations.

➢ Circular migration should be tested concretely as a mutually beneficial policy arrangement between origin and destination countries. More information is needed about the effectiveness of current schemes, with a view to improving them; and the broad working definition should be more detailed to facilitate future evaluations. Pilot projects should be attempted, with proper monitoring in order to assess their effectiveness and relevance. The following actions were agreed during the session:

8. Hold a **workshop on circular migration** prior to the next Forum meeting to lay the groundwork for future partnerships: for action by the European Commission, the initiator, and Mauritius, which is likely to host it. The workshop would use the Mauritian model and sharpen the definition of circular migration to operationalize the opportunities and benefits it holds for origin and destination countries to be held at the end of 2007 or early 2008, and to be reported in Manila in 2008.

9. Undertake an **independent assessment of the development impacts of skills circulation models**, such as MIDA (Migration for Development in Africa) and TOKTEN; and assess the feasibility of scaling them up and/or expanding them for greater development impact in the country of origin. This would be discussed with the implementing international organizations; and progress reported at the Global Forum meeting in Manila in 2008 by interested Governments.

3.2 Round table 2 — Remittances and other diaspora resources: Increasing their net volume and development impact

(Coordination: Mr. Romeo Matsas, Global Forum Task force)

Round table 2 looked at remittances and other diaspora resources as private initiatives to which Governments should respond by leveraging their positive impact on development. Four areas were addressed:

- Reduction of cost, formalization of transfers and the role of new technologies;
- Options to leverage the development impact of remittances at the micro level and prevent their negative impact;
- Options to leverage the development impact of remittances at the macro level and respond to their negative impact;
- Partnerships to be established between Governments and diasporas to enhance their positive impact on the development of the country of origin.

Main observations and findings

Migrants originating from developing countries transfer money worldwide, North-South but also South-South. They can remit part of their earnings to their relatives, they can invest, or they can support philanthropy activities on their own. However, government policies are essential in order to leverage their positive development potential. Remittances to developing countries are one of the largest sources of external finance for these countries, and can represent a large share of GDP for some of them. The World Bank estimates that recorded remittances to developing countries (i.e. excluding informal flows) reached $206 billion in 2006, almost two thirds of foreign direct investment ($325 billion), and almost twice as much as official aid ($104 billion) received by these countries. Remittances are also considered to be more stable and evenly spread than other financial flows such as official development assistance or foreign direct investment, and are also considered to be countercyclical.

By their very nature, remittances are private flows, the allocation of which often relates more to personal reasons and incentives than to objective economic analysis. Remittances can also constitute a financial burden for the migrants themselves. Given their private nature, *remittances cannot be appropriated by Governments*, but their positive impact on development can be increased through options, incentives and tools designed and implemented by Governments in partnership with other relevant actors. Remittances do not diminish the need for ODA and they are not an alternative to national development efforts by the Governments concerned. Apart from the fact that migration should never become an alternative to individual or national development, Governments should be aware that when diaspora members are provided with government support to be active in their country of origin, local populations of these countries may interpret this as an encouragement to migrate. Such a message should be avoided.

The potential links between remittances and development are numerous and complex, as their impact is not just economic but also social and cultural. Remittances have been associated with increased household investments in education and health and also have an impact on gender relations. On the other

hand, they can also have negative effects, such as creating recipients' dependency or increasing exchange rates. The benefits of remittances for development are, therefore, conditional upon the broader economic and political context.

In this regard, reducing remittance costs can create incentives for migrants to use formal remittance channels, if supported by capacity-building both for the financial sector and for remittance senders and recipients. In turn, improving the formalization of transfers offers opportunities to leverage the development impact of remittances by providing options for individual savings, investments or support to local development projects. Increased formalization of remittance transfers also makes possible better policy planning for development and for responding to the possible negative impact of these flows.

Beyond remittances, diasporas also carry out various activities — such as exchange of skills, professional capacity-building, philanthropy, increasing trade and investment links, etc. — which have an important development potential for their country of origin. While this potential is broadly acknowledged, Governments of both countries of origin and destination face similar challenges in engaging with these partners in activities such as devising new tools, identifying interlocutors, or ensuring ownership of development projects by a country or community of origin.

A generic recommendation that came out of the round-table sessions was to continue exchanging best practices among Friends of the Forum, possibly including through the Global Forum website, as participants strongly felt that the international community is still at a learning-by-doing stage on improving the development impact of remittances and diaspora activities.

Recommendations and proposed actions

➢ On the reduction of remittance costs and improvement of their formalization, participants proposed the following actions for consideration by Governments:

1. **Enhance competition** on the remittance market by (i) avoiding monopolies and promoting partnerships that enable more actors to enter this market, including through more relative flexibility of regulations for the remittance industry, taking into account the legitimate need for security regulations (fight against money-laundering and terrorism financing, etc.); and by (ii) engaging with financial institutions to raise their awareness of the relevance of remittances.

2. **Facilitate transfers** by supporting partnerships between:

   - Commercial banks, money transfer operators and microfinance institutions;
   - Commercial banks located in sending and receiving countries;
   - Central banks of sending and recipient countries, to enhance payment systems.

3. **Implement financial literacy programmes** tailored to the needs of remittance senders and recipients (including in pre-departure programmes) and **ensure transparent dissemination of information** on transfer costs.

4. **Promote public/private partnerships for the use of new technologies** to facilitate transfers and reduce costs.

5. **Support research** on remittance senders' behaviour.

➢ On the need to ensure positive micro-impacts of remittances on development, participants proposed the following actions for consideration by Governments:

6. **Make possible a diversified supply of financial services** (from micro-insurance, micropension, etc. to investment opportunities, etc.) by the private sector for remittance senders and recipients, e.g. through the creation of multi-stakeholder partnerships, while retaining the possibility for Governments to intervene as necessary and ensuring full use of existing services.

7. **Set up intermediary structures** for on-the-ground management of migrant investments in the country of origin, taking into account the necessary gradual approach from individual to collective, local and national investment.

8. **Provide financial literacy** programmes and better information on financial services to remittance senders and recipients.

9. **Support research** on tools and incentives needed for Governments to make remittances become investments, as well as on the impact of remittances on the situation of women and children.

➢ On the need to ensure positive macro-impacts of remittances on development, participants proposed the following actions for consideration by Governments:

10. **Improve remittance statistics** to enable their inclusion in calculations of country creditworthiness, to facilitate access to international financing that can fund development projects.

11. **Support securitization of future remittance flows** to access international financing that can fund development projects.

12. Promote the issuance of **diaspora bonds** where appropriate to access international financing that can fund development projects.

13. **Redress remittances' possible negative macro-economic impacts** through long-term structural solutions rather than short-term solutions.

➢ On partnerships with diasporas to enhance the development impact of their activities, participants proposed the following actions for consideration by Governments:

14. **Identify partners** within the diaspora (numbers, location, skills, etc.) and support diaspora organizations' organizational and representation capacities.

15. **Establish triangular partnerships** between diasporas, home and host countries and **increase coordination** among different ministerial departments in home and host countries, between home and host

countries and between host countries harbouring diaspora of the same origin.

16. **Enhance links between diasporas and countries of origin**, including over generations, through regular dialogue and information channels (formal or informal, political involvement) and provide accurate information to diasporas about development and investment opportunities in countries of origin.

17. **Create an enabling environment for diaspora activities**, for instance by providing multiple re-entry visas, dual citizenship, recognition of skills and portability of social welfare.

18. **Make possible the consultation of diasporas as well as the coordination** of their interventions with national and local development plans to enhance their sustainability.

19. Research further the **reciprocal influence** between diasporas' integration in the host country and their involvement in the development of their country of origin.

3.3 Round table 3 — Enhancing policy and institutional coherence and promoting partnerships

(Coordination: Ms. Valérie Van Goethem, Global Forum Task force)

Enhancing policy and institutional coherence between migration and development requires, at all levels: (i) a strong political commitment by Governments to develop a common view on the interrelationship between migration policies and development policies, shared responsibilities between countries of origin and countries of destination, an institutionalized framework for government coordination, inter-State cooperation and informal international consultative processes; and (ii) a concerted effort for government capacity-building and further research and impact assessment to define and implement better evidence-based policies. Three main areas[4] were addressed by round table 3:

- Latest initiatives and progress for measuring migration and development-related impacts;
- Coherent policy planning and methodology to link migration and development;
- Regional consultative processes on migration, and development: advancing cooperation.

Main observations and findings

There are both synergies and tensions between development policies and migration policies and there is a need to improve policy coherence in these fields without manipulating or subordinating either policy. How this is done needs to reflect the realities and circumstances of each country. However the political impetus is needed in all countries for this to happen.

[4] A fourth session of round table 3 addressed the issue of the future of the Global Forum process (Session 3.3). It is reported under point IV of the report.

Institutional capacity, including mechanisms for cooperation and systematic dialogue, will to a large extent define how well a country can create coherence between its national policies and the roles of various ministries and agencies engaged in migration and development-related issues, in particular those in charge of migration, development, trade, agriculture, employment and social affairs, environment, finance and security. Having a "migration and development" focal point within each of the relevant ministries, a "migration and development" budget line or an inter-ministerial consultative body on migration and development at the central government level could constitute very helpful first steps towards that end. However, adequate staff, financial and other resources are necessary to this end.

There is a continued need for research on thematic priorities and for data gathering on the migration and development nexus, and the dissemination and sharing of such data and research, including on the social impact of migration, the propensity to migrate, and to return. Easily accessible and concise policy-oriented research is required and should be made available to policymakers. It is also necessary to make better use of existing data and encourage relevant international bodies to further enhance their data development efforts in order to devise appropriate policy strategies.

There is also a need for more active sharing among States of their experiences related to the migration and development nexus, including through national Global Forum focal points, or through online databanks, newsletters etc. Similarly, better information on legal, social and otherwise relevant conditions should be made available to migrants, both before they leave their country of origin and when they arrive in the country of destination. A clearer view is needed of current policies of government donors and development agencies and how these actors could more usefully contribute to the debate and action on migration and development.

The role of regional consultative processes (RCPs) in enhancing the contribution of migration to development is recognized, but needs to be strengthened and supported. Closer linkages between RCPs and formal regional government processes should be encouraged, and there should also be a system in place for regular information exchange between RCPs and the Global Forum.

Recommendations and proposed actions

➢ Greater intertwining of migration and development policies is required in order to shift the existing paradigm and make migration work better for development and vice versa. There is a need to ensure continued political commitment and work towards shared responsibilities between origin and destination countries in promoting and achieving greater policy coherence and a common view on the potential mutually beneficial interrelationship between migration and development policies. Participants proposed the following recommendations and actions for consideration by Governments:

1. **To include migration in national development planning processes** including, where relevant, Poverty Reduction Strategies. For this purpose, consultations should be held with civil society actors, including diaspora organizations. A first step towards this end could be the production of a **national policy and action plan** on how to promote synergies between migration and development policies and actions.

2. **To establish formal and informal mechanisms**, adequately resourced, to enable those government officials responsible for migration policies and development policies to communicate and consult with one another on ways to promote synergies between their respective policies and decisions. It is essential that these consultations take place at all levels of government.

The following concrete actions were suggested:

- All Governments should **maintain and reinforce the Global Forum focal points** in order to facilitate further dialogue at the national level, as well as networking at the global level between Governments participating in the Global Forum. These focal points shall be regularly in contact with each other at the national level and shall be established at a sufficiently high level of policymaking or at least, shall regularly report to policymakers.

- The **establishment of a working group** to look at good practices and lessons learned in promoting policy coherence within Governments, building on the thematic survey undertaken by Sweden in the leading-up to the first Forum meeting. A follow-up survey could be undertaken before the next Global Forum meeting and a subsequent progress report with analysis of the responses.

Sweden, as chair and coordinator of session 3.2 of the first Global Forum meeting, is ready to continue to work actively on these issues in the future, together with other countries willing to take the lead of such a group. A report from the working group could be presented in Manila next year.

- Developed countries and international organizations should support the **strengthening of capacity-building** in developing countries both at the levels of policymaking and of institutional set-up better to address migration and development-related impacts.

➢ There is a need to support initiatives aimed at gathering policy-relevant data on migration and development-related impacts, and to produce analytical information and knowledge to be made available to policymakers. This will benefit from new partnerships to identify priority areas where cooperation and joint action could lead to better results. Such support would be a signal of a serious commitment to examining the impacts of migration and development. Participants proposed that the following recommendations and actions be considered by Governments:

3. **To support capacity-building initiatives** to develop more effective systems for monitoring migrant flows to and from developing countries and better policy planning; and to provide support to Southern and Northern data-gathering institutions. This needs to be developed with the support of the donor community and relevant international organizations.

4. The Forum is invited to consider the possibility of:

   - Establishing an **expert working group** of government policymakers, researchers and civil society, from both migration and development communities, in order to assess and coordinate research priorities. Key persons would be drawn together and sponsors could help support the research.

- Developing a **brief report** on key policy lessons from existing research, to be presented in Manila 2008.

- Establishing a **working group** between relevant institutions on better data gathering and sharing.

Finland, as chair and coordinator of session 3.1 of the first Global Forum meeting, is willing to continue working on these issues and is looking into options for beginning to implement policies and findings, in close cooperation and coordination with other countries and agencies.

➢ Given the State-led nature of RCPs, any decisions regarding the activities of RCPs need to be taken by participating Governments. Greater integration of development considerations into the agendas of RCPs can be achieved in particular through the following measures:

5. **To promote greater sharing of information** about activities and achievements of RCPs in the fields of migration and development. This could be achieved for instance through:

   - Regular meetings for greater cross-fertilization between RCPs;

   - A common database on good practices and a website;

   - An RCP newsletter.

6. **To encourage a more systematic evaluation of RCPs' achievements and impacts** in the fields of migration and development in order to promote a better understanding of the contribution of RCPs to managing migration for development.

7. **To encourage the involvement of government departments and agencies** of developing and developed countries (and where appropriate, civil society actors) **responsible for development in RCPs** meetings and projects.

8. **To reinforce donor support for migration and development-related activities of RCPs**, especially in regions of high migration and development interest to the donor community (e.g. Migration Dialogue for Southern Africa (MIDSA) and Migration Dialogue for Western Africa (MIDWA)).

9. **To promote more linkages between RCPs and other regional forums** (e.g. regional trade systems and integration regimes) and further to develop links between RCPs and interregional political level dialogues.

10. **To ensure a sustainable two-way information flow between RCPs and the Global Forum**, for example:

    - By undertaking regular surveys of RCPs from a migration and development perspective;

    - And/or by establishing a network of Global Forum focal points in different RCPs to support this exchange.

3.4 Horizontal issues

(Coordination: Ms. Véronique de Ryckere, Global Forum Task force)

The programme of the governmental part of the Global Forum meeting was based on the results of the global survey conducted in November 2006. During the meetings of the Friends of the Forum, a number of States requested that root causes of migration, human rights and gender should be examined in the framework of the first meeting of the Global Forum, although the majority of States had not prioritized these subjects in the survey. These cross-cutting issues were therefore examined in a horizontal manner throughout the meeting.

General observations

Root causes of international migration are diverse, complex and require further research. They mainly relate to economic, demographic and social disparities and in particular to poverty, political instability, conflict, non-respect of human rights and climatic and environmental degradation. These result essentially in a lack of development prospects for which migration is too often considered to be the only alternative. However, migrants often lack information on many aspects related to migration, including costs, travel conditions and conditions in the destination countries as well as real prospects in those countries.

Migrants contribute to the development of both host and home countries and can help address the root causes of migration. While it is widely assumed that their development contribution is closely linked to the protection of their rights as well as their integration in host countries, further research regarding the latter aspect would be valuable.

Fundamental rights apply to all human beings. Existing international human and labour rights instruments are the backdrop for the debate on migration and development. However, there is evidence that these instruments are not always respected where migrants are concerned.

Channels of legal migration are limited, and the mismatch between legal migration channels and labour migration paves the way for human smuggling and trafficking. Illegal migrants are generally more vulnerable to abuse.

Regarding the gender dimension, migration has a significant impact on the economic role played by migrant women and/or households headed by women who remain in the home country and on the dynamics of communities and society.

Data on migration and development generally do not consider the gender aspect. It is, however, recognized that currently women constitute almost half of all migrants worldwide; they are strongly represented in the high- and low-skilled labour sectors. As senders and recipients of remittances, migrant women are major contributors to economic growth and poverty reduction. On the other hand, migrant women have specific vulnerabilities. In low-skilled, unprotected and poorly regulated sectors in particular they are vulnerable to exploitation. Women are also often excluded from or marginalized in diaspora organization activities.

Recommendations and proposed actions

Governments, where appropriate in cooperation with non-State actors, are invited to:

Root causes of migration

1. Create an enabling environment for international **migration to occur by choice rather than out of necessity** through the following actions:

   - Addressing the root causes of migration and, in some instances and if appropriate, targeting development and other policies to areas subject to strong prospective migratory outflow. This implies notably a greater coherence in the policies which have an impact on development of countries of migrant origin;
   - Providing information to potential migrants on the costs and conditions of migration as well as on their real prospects in destination countries;
   - Creating in countries of origin the enabling environment that offers endogenous prospects, particularly through good governance and employment-generation strategies.

2. **Optimize migrants' contributions to development** of their country of origin through the following actions:

   - integrating, where relevant, migrants' contributions into national development strategies of countries of origin, while preserving the free choice of migrants to engage in development-related activities;
   - fostering links and partnerships among diasporas, countries of origin and host countries;
   - creating an enabling environment for diaspora activities.

3. Undertake **further research** in particular on the root causes and their consequences for migratory flows and on the impact of diasporas' integration in host countries on their development activities in home countries.

Human rights

1. **Combat racism and xenophobia**. Integration of migrants in host countries is one important element in this context.

2. **Respect and implement relevant international instruments** (United Nations and International Labour Organization) on human and labour rights and, further to the appeal made by a number of States in favour of the ratification of the International Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (1990), address in a concerted and consensual manner the current stalemate on this issue.

3. Adopt legislation and procedures to **ensure protection** and **non-discriminatory treatment of migrants** and give due consideration to family life. The following actions were suggested:

- establishing mechanisms to negotiate decent and equitable wage and working conditions, including health and social aspects;
- enacting and implementing legislation allowing action against employers who do not respect the labour rights of migrant workers;
- establishing standardized systems of recruitment, licensing and regulating private recruiters and a code of ethical recruitment.

4. **Empower migrants** in particular by:
   - providing information and orientation in origin (including for potential migrants) and destination countries notably on rights and obligations;
   - establishing support structures in destination countries;
   - recognizing qualifications acquired abroad;
   - providing options for re-entry to the host country;
   - facilitating migrants' access to banking services and financial instruments.
5. **Combat human trafficking** and address the mismatch between legal migration channels and labour migration.
6. **Monitor the impact of initiatives** taken in the field of migration and development **on the human and labour rights of migrants**.

Gender

1. Promote legislation, policies and practices for **gender-based development** and create an enabling environment emphasizing gender equity. The empowerment of women, through the following actions, is an important element in this context:
   - training and skills upgrading;
   - providing information and orientation on rights, obligations, risks, opportunities, integration or return options in origin and destination countries;
   - ensuring greater access and equity in access to financial services and livelihood opportunities;
   - strengthening female engagement in diasporas' development activities.
2. **Protect mainly female — but also male — migrants**, notably through:
   - the adoption of gender-sensitive labour migration policies and practices ensuring decent working conditions;
   - the establishment of gender-sensitive support structures in destination countries.
3. Improve **gender-related data collection** and **analysis of the impact of migration on families**.

4. Marketplace

During the preparatory process leading up to the first meeting of the Forum, new partnerships were forged under the leadership of Governments, and it is expected that this cooperation will be pursued after Brussels, to the Manila meeting and beyond. An important mechanism in developing such partnerships was the creation of a "Marketplace", facilitated by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. This Marketplace has as its objective to allow countries to "market" their needs in connection with migration and development and to find partners who could assist them.

In the course of the meeting in Brussels, **32 Marketplace consultations** were held during which a large number of project ideas were discussed. Governments as well as international organizations discussed concrete proposals for information, advice, training, equipment, capacity-building, project implementation and other initiatives to enhance the mutual benefits of migration and development. The Marketplace thus offered another means for the Forum process to gain momentum, by bringing together partners and by generating specific and practical outcomes to meet the concrete needs of Governments.

Given its success, the **Marketplace will continue** as part of the Forum process. It will be reopened soon in order to offer interested Governments the opportunity to submit proposals related to the outcomes of the first Global Forum meeting.

Funding, however, will be critical, and interested donors are invited to reflect on ways to meet this need. It will be essential for the Forum to be kept abreast of the results of this cooperation in future meetings. A first report is expected in Manila in 2008.

5. Conclusions, the way forward and the role of focal points

The Brussels meeting of the Global Forum and the process leading to it laid the foundations for a new, informal and State-led process for establishing new approaches to the migration and development debate through dialogue and partnerships. It sought to find concrete answers to the mutual challenges and opportunities offered by migration for development and vice versa. By moving development to the centre of the migration debate, it created a wider space for better achieving the respective objectives of migration and development policies, and for developing in the longer term a common vision on migration. This common vision would be based on a better understanding of the consequences of migration for development, and how migration policies can contribute to developing countries' achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. It can ultimately ensure that people migrate by choice rather than out of necessity.

The Belgian Taskforce will make a full report available later in 2007 on the process and the first meeting of the Global Forum. As of 1 September 2007, the Republic of the Philippines will be the next Global Forum Chair-in-Office. The next meeting of the Forum will be organized in Manila in the second half of 2008. Reports on some of the issues discussed in Brussels will be expected at this meeting. While the Manila meeting may address other aspects of migration and development,

it will also include continuing debate and reports on some of the issues discussed in Brussels, particularly those resulting in follow-up actions.

As to the future of the Global Forum, an assessment of the first meeting and the process will be made on the basis of the evaluation form that Belgium distributed to all participants at the meeting. More than 100 such forms were returned by the participants, representing a balanced geographic mix. The following provisional modalities were already agreed upon for continuation of the Global Forum process: a troika comprising the past, present and future chairs, a regionally balanced Steering Group, the Friends of the Forum (open to all United Nations Member States), and a task force attached to the chair-in-office to organize, administer and report on the actual meeting (see annex for details).

Beyond the operational modalities, five elements will contribute to the successful continuation of the Global Forum: exchange of information; funding support; ongoing government engagement; internal government coordination; and favourable public opinion.

- *Exchange of information*: participating Governments need to continue exchanging expertise and lessons learned, including from the implementation of the Forum's recommendations at national and international levels. It is equally important for the Forum to build upon regional initiatives and interregional conferences such as the Europe-Africa conferences and vice versa.

- *Funding*: funding will be needed not only to organize Forum meetings and preparatory activities but also to support projects and outcomes from both the round-table sessions and the marketplace.

- *Ongoing government engagement*: Governments need to take stock of the outcomes of these meetings, define appropriate strategies, commence actions and measure the results of these actions.

- *Internal government coordination*: Governments should take the necessary steps to place migration and development high on their political agenda, and to strengthen the capacities and roles of their respective departments or ministries to participate in the Forum.

- *Favourable public opinion*: information about the achievements of the Global Forum needs to be circulated widely among the public to ensure public support for a more positive perception about migration as an opportunity for development.

The focal points are key to achieving all these. Their role, function and where appropriate their level should be strengthened, as conduits to the Forum, as coordinators of intragovernmental engagement, information-sharing and cooperation, also on initiatives arising from the Global Forum meetings, and as vehicles for interaction at the regional level. Governments should entrust them with an advocacy role to promote a more comprehensive approach towards migration policies taking development and other relevant policy areas into account. The networking of focal points at the global level should be reinforced for this purpose.

[13 August 2007]

Annex I

The Global Forum on Migration and Development

Operating modalities

The Global Forum on Migration and Development is a voluntary, intergovernmental, non-binding and informal consultative process open to all States Members and observers of the United Nations. United Nations agencies and other international and regional bodies may be invited as observers. It was established on the proposal of the Secretary-General of the United Nations at the September 2006 General Assembly High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development. The Forum was initiated by Belgium and is led by Governments. Its purpose is to address, in a transparent manner, the multidimensional aspects, opportunities and challenges related to international migration and its interlinkages with development, to bring together government expertise from all regions, to enhance dialogue, cooperation and partnership and to foster practical and action-oriented outcomes at the national, regional and global levels. National Focal Points have been designated by participating Governments to coordinate Forum-related preparations at the national level.

These operating modalities are of a preliminary nature and aim at ensuring sufficient continuity and practical support for the incoming chair(s), to be assessed and revised, as appropriate, in 2008.

1. Chairing arrangements — Troika

The host country (Chair-in-Office) assumes responsibility for the preparatory process and the implementation of each Forum. The host Government chairs all sessions related to Forum preparations and chairs the Forum.

The Chair-in-Office is assisted by a Co-chair — the country that organized the previous Forum. Once a third country has been identified to host a following meeting of the Forum, the three countries concerned will form the Troika that includes the outgoing Chair, the Chair-in-Office, and the forthcoming Chair of the Forum. The Co-chairs shall assist the Chair-in-Office.

The Chair-in-Office should, in principle, alternate annually between a developing and a developed country. Countries interested in assuming the Chair of the Forum shall communicate their intention to the Troika.

2. Steering Group

The Steering Group is comprised of Governments that are firmly committed to offer sustained political and conceptual support to the Chair-in-Office and to the Forum process, and to ensure continuity of the process. Its membership shall be sufficient in number to provide efficiency, flexibility and transparency. The Troika Governments are ex officio members. The Steering Group is regionally balanced and its composition takes into account different migration perspectives and interests of Governments, including those Governments that contribute substantially to the migration and development debate and are prepared to provide concrete input to the thematic preparation of Forum meetings. Steering Group members and the Chair-in-Office are also called upon to brief other Governments, as appropriate, on Forum-

related developments, including through the National Forum Focal Points. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General on international migration and development shall be invited to the meetings.

Following the first meeting of the Forum in Brussels, the Steering Group and the Troika, with the support of participating Governments/National Focal Points, will undertake an assessment of the Forum process, including the preparations for and outcome of the first meeting of the Forum and the operating modalities of the Forum.

The Steering Group is convened and chaired by the Chair-in-Office. It meets at regular intervals to consider and advise on all relevant policy issues pertaining to the smooth running of the Forum process. It may also create thematic follow-up working groups. It meets in Geneva.

3. Friends of the Forum

The Friends of the Forum is open to all States Members and observers of the United Nations. Specialized agencies of the United Nations and other international organizations may be invited as observers. It acts as a sounding board, ensures that all States Members and observers of the United Nations are kept abreast of Forum-related developments and advises on the agenda, structure and format of each Forum meeting. Friends of the Forum meetings are chaired by the Chair-in-Office. They are held, in principle, at least twice in between each Forum meeting, at a venue to be determined by the Chair-in-Office.

4. Support structure

The Support Structure should assist the Chair-in-Office in preparations for the Forum, including the deliberations of the Steering Group and the Friends of the Forum. It shall be responsible for maintaining the archives and for other related matters such as operating a website.

The support structure is attached to and supervised by the Chair-in-Office. It may be comprised of host government staff as well as experts and advisers seconded from other Governments and from interested institutions.

5. Funding

Each Chair-in-Office prepares a comprehensive budget for the respective Forum, indicating the part it will cover through its own resources and the part for which it will require external funding. Provisions for the possible transfer of leftover funds from one Chair-in-Office to the succeeding Chair-in-Office must also be considered.

Financial contributions are paid to a fund administered by the Chair-in-Office. The Chair-in-Office incurs expenditures in accordance with the budget and ensures the efficient management of all funds received, including controlling and auditing.

6. Relationship with the United Nations system

The Forum does not form part of the United Nations system. However, the Forum maintains, through the Steering Group, links with the Secretary-General, notably through the Special Representative on international migration and

development. The Forum can also benefit from the expertise of the inter-agency Global Migration Group (GMG) and may consult with the GMG both through the individual institutions and the GMG chair. The Forum may also consult and cooperate with other relevant international and regional bodies.

The Chair-in-Office conveys the outcomes of the Forum meeting to the Secretary-General.

7. Participation of civil society

Appropriate arrangements shall be made for the participation of civil society, including relevant non-governmental organizations.

8. Format of Forum meetings

The Forum meets every year for an interactive and practice-related dialogue. It is attended by high-level and senior government policymakers and its deliberations are held under the Chatham House Rule. An outcome report is prepared at the end of each Forum.

[1 August 2007]

Annex II

Roundtable panellists

List of panellists per regions

Africa (11 panellists)

Round table 1

Session 1.1: Dr. Ken Sagoe, Director, Human Resources Development, Ghana Health Service, Ghana

Dr. Ann Phoya, Director of Nursing Services, Ministry of Health, Malawi

Session 1.2: Mr. Youssef Amrani, Director General of Bilateral Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Morocco

Session 1.4: Mr. Ali Mansoor, Financial Secretary, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, Mauritius

Mr. Sefu Kawaya, MIDA Coordinator, Ministry of Labour, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

Round table 2

General rapporteur for round table 2:

H.E. Professor Oumar Hammadoun Dicko, Minister for Malians Abroad and for African Integration, Mali

Session 2.1: Mr. Abdelatif Fezzani, Deputy Director, DG Europe, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tunisia

Session 2.2: Mr. Seringe Dieye, Director of Chancery, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Senegal

Session 2.4: Mr. Kaba Sangare, Technical Counsellor, Ministry for Malians Abroad and for African Integration, Mali

Round table 3

Session 3.1: Mr. Samuel Goagoseb, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, Namibia

Session 3.2: Dr. Isaac Mensa-Bonsu, Director, Plan Coordination, National Development Planning Commission, Ghana

Latin America and Caribbean States (6 panellists)

Round table 1

Session 1.2: Mr. Carlos Rodriguez Bocanegra, Counsellor, Embassy of Colombia to the Kingdom of Belgium and Grand Duchy of

Luxembourg, and Mission to the European Union, Brussels, Colombia

Session 1.3: H.E. Mr. Antonio Arenales Forno, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Guatemala to the European Union, the Kingdom of Belgium and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, Brussels, Guatemala

Session 1.4: Ms. Ana Eugenia Duran, Vice-Minister of Government and Policy, Costa Rica

Round table 2

Session 2.2: Mr. Carlos Gonzalez Gutierrez, Executive Director of the Institute of Mexicans abroad, Mexico

Session 2.3: H.E. Ms. Margarita Escobar, Deputy Minister of External Relations for Salvadorians abroad, El Salvador

Round table 3

Session 3.1: Dr. Lester Mejía Solís, Ambassador of Nicaragua to Belgium

Asia (8 panellists)

Round table 1

General rapporteur for round table 1:

Ms. Patricia Sto. Tomas, Chairwoman of the Development Bank of the Philippines, former Minister of Labour, the Philippines

Session 1.2: Ms. Rosalinda Baldoz, Administrator of the Philippines Overseas Employment Administration, the Philippines

Session 1.3: Dr. Hamidur Rashid, Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh

Round table 2

Session 2.1: Mr. Marianito D. Roque, Administrator of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, the Philippines

Mr. Diwa C. Guinigundo, Deputy Governor of the Central Bank, the Philippines

Session 2.4: H.E. Mr. Manjaiiv Singh Puri, Joint Secretary to the Government of India, India

Round table 3

Session 3.3: H.E. Mr. Enrique A. Manalo, Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations in Geneva

Session 3.4: Dr. Endang Sulistyaningsih, Director of Promotion for Overseas Employment, National Agency for Placement and Protection of Overseas Workers, Indonesia

Europe (17 panellists)

General rapporteur for horizontal issues:

Mr. Jozef De Witte, Director of the Centre for Equality of Opportunity and the Fight against Racism, Belgium

Round table 1

Session 1.1: Mr. Mark Lowcock, Director General for Policy and International, Department for International Development, United Kingdom

Ms. Renée Jones-Bos, Director General for Regional Policy and Consular Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Netherlands

Session 1.2: Ms. Marta Rodríguez-Tarduchy, Director General of immigration, Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Spain

Session 1.4: Ms. Rachel Bayani, Counselor Justice and Internal Affairs, Permanent Representation of the Duchy of Luxembourg at the European Union, Luxembourg

Mr. Robert K. Visser, Director General for Legislation, International Affairs and Immigration, Ministry of Justice, the Netherlands

Round table 2

Session 2.1: Ms. Tamara Zaballa Utrillas, Head of Area, Multilateral Organizations and European Union Unit, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Spain

Session 2.2: Ms. Manuela Ramin-Osmundsen, Project Coordinator for Migration and Development, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway

Session 2.3: Ms. Ayse Elif Talu, Central Bank, Turkey

Mr. Marin Molosag, Deputy Governor of the National Bank of Moldova

Ms. Maria João Azevedo, Head of Division, International Relations Department, Banco de Portugal, Portugal

Session 2.4: Mr. Igor Haustrate, Deputy Director-General for Development Cooperation, Belgium

Round table 3

Session 3.1: Ms. Marjatta Rasi, Under-Secretary of State, Finland

Session 3.2: Mr. Joakim Stymne, State Secretary to the Minister for International Development Cooperation, Sweden and Mr. Ola Henrikson, Director General for Migration and Asylum Policy, Sweden

Ms. Anita Bundegaard, Former Danish Minister of Development Cooperation, Denmark

Session 3.3: H.E. Ms. Régine De Clercq, Ambassador for Migration and Asylum Policy, Executive Director of the Global Forum on Migration and Development

Session 3.4: Mr. Kevin O'Sullivan, Director of Immigration Policy, Irish National Immigration Service, Ireland

European Commission (4 panellists)

Session 1.4: Mr. Jean-Louis De Brouwer, Director for Immigration, Borders and Asylum, Directorate General Justice, Freedom and Security, European Commission

Session 2.1: Mr. Pedro de Lima, Deputy Economic Adviser, European Investment Bank (EIB)

Session 3.1: Mr. Robertus Rozenburg, Deputy Head of Unit, Directorate General for Development, European Commission

Session 3.4: Mr. Peter Bosch, Principal Administrator, Immigration and Asylum Unit, Directorate General — Justice, Freedom and Security, European Commission

International organizations (12 panellists)

Roundtable 1

Session 1.1: Mr. Jean-Pierre Garson, Head of Non-member Economies and International Migration Division, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

Dr. Jean Yan, Chief Scientist for Nursing and Midwifery, Chair of the Migration Technical Working Group, World Health Organization (WHO)

Session 1.2: Mr. Ibrahim Awad, Director of the International Migration Programme, International Labour Organization (ILO)

Session 1.3: Mr. Shahidul Haque, Regional Representative for South Asia, International Organization for Migration (IOM)

Roundtable 2

Session 2.2: Mr. Arun Kashyap, Advisor, Private sector development, UNDP

Session 2.3: Mr. Dilip Ratha, Senior Economist, Development Prospects Group Manager — Migration and Remittances, World Bank

Session 2.4: Ms. Maria Ochoa-Llido, Head of the Migration and Roma Department, Council of Europe

Round table 3

General rapporteur for round table 3:

Mr. Richard Manning, Chair of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC)

Session 3.2: Mr. Luca Barbone, Director for Poverty Reduction and Development Effectiveness, World Bank

Mr. Jeff Dayton Johnson, Senior Economist, Coordinator of the OECD Development Centre's Research Activities on Policy Coherence

Session 3.3: Mr. Peter Sutherland, Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on international migration and development

Session 3.4: Ms. Michele Klein Solomon, Director, Migration Policy, Research and Communications Department, IOM

Others (7 panellists)

Round table 1

Session 1.3: Mr. René Mantha, Director, "Fondation des Entreprises en Recrutement de Main-d'Œuvre Agricole Etrangère" (FERME), Quebec

Professor Philip Martin, College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, Department of Agricultural Economics, UC Davis, United States

Mr. Rene Cristobal, President of Manpower Resources of Asia, Spokesperson of the Association for Professionalism in Overseas Employment, the Philippines

Round table 2

Session 2.2: Ms. Anne-Françoise Lefevre, Adviser to the Chairman of the Management Committee, World Savings Banks Institute

Session 2.4: Mr. Chukwu-Emeka Chikizie, Executive-Director, AFFORD

Round table 3

Session 3.1: Dr. Dhananjayan Sriskandarajah, Senior Research Fellow and Head of the Migration, Equalities and Citizenship team, Institute for Public Policy Research

Session 3.4: Mr. Vincent Williams, Programme Manager, Southern African Migration Project (SAMP), South Africa

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Sustainable development

Letter dated 27 September 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

At the initiative of the President of Indonesia, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, a Special Leaders' Meeting of Tropical Rainforest Countries was held at the United Nations, New York, on 24 September 2007.

The Special Leaders' Meeting brought together the Heads of State and Government and the high-level representatives of Brazil, Cameroon, Colombia, the Congo, Costa Rica, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea and Peru.

At its conclusion, the Special Leaders' Meeting issued a joint statement, which emphasized enhanced cooperation among tropical rainforest countries and highlighted important principles relating to sustainable forest management and the role of forests in the context of climate change (see annex).

In this regard, I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be issued as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 54.

(*Signed*) R. M. Marty M. **Natalegawa**
Permanent Representative

07-53714 (E) 161007

Annex to the letter dated 27 September 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Joint statement of the leaders of tropical rainforest countries

(New York, 24 September 2007)

We, the Heads of State and Government and the high-level representatives of Brazil, Cameroon, Colombia, the Congo, Costa Rica, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea and Peru, met in New York on 24 September 2007, resolving to enhance cooperation among countries blessed with a wealth of tropical rainforests.

We resolve to promote sustained economic growth, sustainable development and eradication of poverty while intensifying our collective efforts towards the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests, along with the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Non-legally Binding Authoritative Statement of Principles for a Global Consensus on the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of All Types of Forests and Agenda 21, both adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and the Millennium Development Goals.

While reaffirming and upholding the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and the sovereign rights of countries over their natural resources, we recognize the primary responsibility of industrialized nations for the current atmospheric interference leading to global warming and its consequences, including the resulting challenges of mitigation and adaptation. We note with concern the recent findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change which indicate that forests may be among the main victims of climate change, resulting in dire impacts on the environment, ecosystems and livelihoods, particularly of those populations that depend directly on forests.

Noting that all types of forests, including tropical forests, play a crucial role in maintaining ecological balance as sinks, sources and reservoirs of greenhouse gases, we emphasize that the tropical rainforests within our countries, which constitute about half the world's tropical rainforests, serve as sources of livelihood and as repositories of the cultural heritage of vast numbers of people, while the ecosystems of these rainforests serve as habitat for diverse biological species and as storehouses of genetic resources for food, medicine and various goods and services that can help sustain present and future generations of humankind.

We also undertake to engage with relevant stakeholders and countries to work constructively on other equally important issues. In this regard, we support the efforts to address the retreat of glaciers which threatens the supply of water required to sustain human life and the agricultural needs of large populations in some developing countries.

While recognizing that many developing countries can contribute to combating climate change through reducing emissions from deforestation, forest degradation and land-use change, we also understand that the challenge for developing countries of reducing emissions from land-use change is complex and cumbersome, as is the

challenge for developed countries of reducing emissions from the industry and energy sectors. Our nations are committed to cooperating among themselves to slow, stop and reverse the loss of forest cover and to promote the rehabilitation of degraded forest lands, forest management and conservation.

We call for the fulfilment of commitments, including those of annex I countries under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to support our voluntary efforts through capacity-building, research and development, and transfer of appropriate environmentally sound technologies.

Further, we call for mobilization of new and additional financial resources sufficient to implement non-restrictive policy approaches and positive incentives, under the Convention, and in other international forums, to support our voluntary efforts in reducing greenhouse gas emissions as well as enhancing sequestration through sustainable forest management and forest conservation, and increasing carbon sinks through afforestation and reforestation, including support for early action from 2008 to 2012 along with expanded activities post-2012. Furthermore, we call for protected areas to be given special consideration by the international community.

We commit ourselves to working together towards the success of the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the third session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be hosted by the Government of Indonesia in Bali from 3 to 14 December 2007. In this regard, we will work to ensure that the issue of a road map for relevant forest issues is addressed in climate change frameworks, in a manner that is fair, equitable and in the common interest of the tropical rainforest countries.

Fully cognizant of the value of intensified and sustained dialogue and cooperation, we commit ourselves to strengthening the bonds of friendship and cooperation among the Governments and peoples of the tropical rainforest countries and invite other tropical rainforest countries to actively participate in this cooperative endeavour.

We also reaffirm our support for United Nations forest-relevant processes and frameworks including the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Forum on Forests and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

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Groups of countries in special situations: specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries: outcome of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation

Letter dated 9 October 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Mongolia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to transmit herewith the report of the Thematic Meeting on International Trade and Trade Facilitation (see annex I). The Meeting was held in Ulaanbaatar on 30 and 31 August 2007 as part of the preparatory process for the midterm review of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 61/212.

The main stakeholders of the Almaty Programme of Action, namely landlocked developing countries, transit developing countries, donor countries and international, regional and subregional organizations, participated in the Meeting. The Meeting resulted in the adoption of a Chairman's summary (see annex II).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annexes could be circulated as a document of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 57 (b).

(*Signed*) Enkhtsetseg **Ochir**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

07-54265 (E) 291007

Annex I to the letter dated 9 October 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Mongolia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Report of the Thematic Meeting on International Trade and Trade Facilitation convened as part of the preparatory process for the midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action

Ulaanbaatar, 30-31 August 2007

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 61/212, the General Assembly decided to hold a midterm review in 2008 of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries. The midterm review would be preceded by regional and substantive preparations in the most effective, well structured and broad participatory manner. Also, intergovernmental mechanisms at the global and regional levels, including those of United Nations regional commissions, as well as relevant substantive material and statistical data, should be effectively utilized in the review process. The Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States was requested by the General Assembly to coordinate the preparatory process. The United Nations system organizations, including the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Development Programme, the regional commissions and relevant international and regional organizations, were also requested, within their respective mandates, to provide necessary support to the review process.

2. The Thematic Meeting on International Trade and Trade Facilitation was the second thematic meeting being organized in 2007 in order to provide substantive inputs to the midterm review by focusing on two of the five Almaty priorities. The first thematic meeting was held in Ouagadougou, from 18 to 20 June 2007, and focused on transit transport infrastructure development. The outcomes of these thematic meetings will serve as substantive inputs to the 2008 midterm review.

3. The Ulaanbaatar Meeting brought together trade ministers and senior officials responsible for trade from landlocked and transit developing countries, representatives of donor countries, United Nations system organizations, international financial institutions and relevant regional and subregional organizations, with a view to review and assess the progress made in the implementation of priority 3 of the Almaty Programme of Action, on international trade and trade facilitation. The Meeting elected Davaadorj Tseren, Minister of Trade and Industry of Mongolia, as Chairman. The representatives of Mali and Bangladesh were elected as Vice-Chairmen and the representative of Switzerland was elected as Vice-Chair cum Rapporteur. On 31 August 2007, the Meeting adopted a Chairman's summary, which is reproduced in annex II. For a list of participants, see annex III.

4. The opening session of the meeting was attended by Miyegombo Enkhbold, Prime Minister of Mongolia; the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States; Tsegmid Tsengel, Minister for Road, Transport and Tourism of Mongolia, and head of the National Committee for Trade and Transport Facilitation; Amadou Daouda Diallo, Chef de Cabinet of the Ministry of Industry and Trade of Mali, and Chairman of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries; the Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Africa of the United Nations Development Programme; and the Deputy Executive Secretary and Officer-In-Charge, a.i., of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

II. Opening session

5. In his statement, Miyegombo Enkhbold, Prime Minister of Mongolia stated that developing mutually beneficial trade relations based on free trade rules, creating more favourable trade relations with all trade partners, and expanding export markets were the common mission and objectives of the landlocked developing countries.

6. The Prime Minister underscored that decreasing transit transport costs by transit countries for landlocked developing countries while providing special and preferential treatment in transit transport to their exported and imported products would be a step towards encouraging fair competition. Working in close collaboration with the transit partners in that field was crucial.

7. The Prime Minister noted that Mongolia was negotiating a transit transport agreement with the Russian Federation and China to reduce transit transport costs and simplify the release, clearance and trans-shipment operations of goods. His Government had established a National Committee for Trade and Transport Facilitation and announced the years of 2006 and 2007 as the Year of Trade Facilitation. Mongolia was vigorously working to create a more favourable legal environment in order to improve customs operations, through amendments to its Customs Law. In 2006 Mongolia had joined the revised Kyoto Convention on the Simplification and Harmonization of Customs Procedures of the World Customs Organization, while, the year before, it had ratified the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network.

8. In concluding, the Prime Minister stressed that, in this era of globalization, coordinated efforts by the international community were of vital importance to reach the objectives set out in the Almaty Programme of Action. Effective and full implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action would contribute significantly to increasing the benefits derived from international trade, thus ensuring sustainable economic development and alleviating poverty in all landlocked developing countries.

9. In his statement, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States stated that although the difficulties of being landlocked permeate every aspect of the development process and poverty alleviation, their impact on the external trade was particularly severe. Landlocked developing countries' share of world trade remained miniscule, though increased

owing to the recent surge in commodity prices, accounting for only 0.76 per cent of the total exports and 0.74 per cent of the total imports of world merchandise in 2006.

10. The Under-Secretary-General shared his thoughts on what needed to be done in the area of international trade and trade facilitation. The international community should ensure better market access for goods from landlocked developing countries and give greater priority and support to the initiatives aimed at the implementation of trade facilitation measures, by providing much-needed technical assistance to boost exports from those countries. The landlocked developing countries should strengthen their concerted action in the World Trade Organization trade talks, especially in the negotiations on trade facilitation, based on the Asunción Platform for the Doha Development Round and the recently adopted Ulaanbaatar Declaration. At the national level, landlocked and transit developing countries should implement a number of policy measures to ease export/import procedures, while at the subregional level, various trade facilitation measures should be undertaken to ensure the speedy movement of goods in transit.

11. The main objective of the Meeting was to review progress made, at national, subregional, regional and international levels in the implementation of priority 3 of the Almaty Programme of Action on international trade and trade facilitation, and deliberate on future actions needed to further strengthen the global partnership for establishing efficient transit transport systems. More needed to be done if landlocked countries were to reap greater benefits from international trade. He advocated strongly for concerted group action in the context of the Doha Round of trade negotiations and effective implementation of trade facilitation measures at the regional and bilateral levels. Enhanced provision of technical assistance by the international community was needed on a demand-driven basis to strengthen landlocked developing countries capacities to implement trade facilitation reforms.

12. The Under-Secretary-General noted that the decision by the General Assembly to convene the midterm review of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action in 2008 reflected the commitment of the international community to the full and effective implementation of the Programme. The review was an important exercise to assess what had been achieved so far, what could have been done better, and how the second half of the implementation period could be effectively utilized to advance on the ultimate goals to assist landlocked developing countries in their effective participation in the international trading system. He stressed the crucial importance of the outcome of the Meeting which would serve as substantive input to the 2008 midterm review. He concluded his statement by reconfirming that the United Nations as a whole, and his Office in particular, would continue to support the efforts of the landlocked developing countries and their transit neighbours towards the full and effective implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action.

13. The Minister for Road, Transport and Tourism of Mongolia, and head of the National Committee for Trade and Transport Facilitation, presented in greater detail the Mongolian efforts in the implementation of priority 3 of the Almaty Programme of Action that had been introduced by the Prime Minister. He noted that the difficulties encountered by Mongolia in its external trade were caused mainly by factors such as strict border control and customs inspection owing to bureaucracy, requirements for security deposits on goods in transit, unexpected delays, detention and partial/complete loss or damage to the cargo and as well as inadequate transport safety measures on roads in its transit neighbours and the lack of possibility to

become engaged in international transit using China's domestic road network. He emphasized the need to revise existing laws and regulations on trade and transport facilitation.

14. The Minister described the functioning and objectives of the recently established Mongolian National Committee for Trade and Transport Facilitation, which included, among others, working towards the signing of the Tripartite Transit Agreement between the Governments of the Russian Federation, the People's Republic of China and Mongolia, and proposed cooperation on trade and transportation facilitation with the Economic Commission for Europe.

15. In his statement, the Chef de Cabinet of the Ministry of Industry and Trade of Mali and Chairman of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries, paid tribute to Mr. Cheick Sidi Diarra in his former capacity as President of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries and congratulated him on his new appointment as United Nations Under-Secretary-General and High Representative. He recalled that the first thematic meeting in preparation for the midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action had been held in his country in June 2007 and had resulted in the adoption of numerous recommendations on the way forward in the implementation of priority 2 of the Almaty Programme of Action, on transit infrastructure development and maintenance.

16. He stressed that in order to achieve significant progress in the participation of landlocked developing countries in the international trading system, the solidarity of the Group remained crucial. He reaffirmed that open dialogue and cooperation with the transit neighbours, as well as the donor community, was to be pursued by the landlocked developing countries with a view to achieve concrete results in terms of the needed technical and financial support.

17. The Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Africa of the United Nations Development Programme stated that at the mid-point of achieving the Millennium Development Goals, it was imperative that efforts by all stakeholders were intensified to reach the agreed targets and promote sustainable human development especially for those countries that were at the risk of missing them. Regretfully, many landlocked developing countries, most in sub-Saharan Africa, the region for which he was responsible at the United Nations Development Programme, fell into that category.

18. He added that while trade was a very powerful engine of growth in the current globalized economy, most landlocked and least developed transit countries were able to realize only very limited benefits. Furthermore, the divergence in the human development indicators between landlocked and coastal developing countries was in fact widening.

19. He noted that challenges could be overcome through concrete and focused actions. Through the Almaty Programme of Action, the international community had committed itself to address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and establish a global framework for action for developing efficient transit transport systems in landlocked and transit developing countries.

20. The Deputy Executive Secretary and Officer-In-Charge, a.i., of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific added that accession to the World Trade Organization was an essential modality for a predictable and stable integration into those systems, and noted that ESCAP, through its effective

partnership with the World Trade Organization, had extended technical assistance to all its members for that purpose.

21. He noted that, while the challenges of being landlocked were enormous, together they could turn those challenges into opportunities, and indeed, the current global and regional economic environment offered opportunities as never before. He reassured the Meeting that the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific would do its utmost to assist in the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, more immediately in the context of the forthcoming regional preparations for the midterm review.

III. Exchange of views on the participation of landlocked developing countries in the international trading system and progress made in the area of trade facilitation

22. Statements were made by the following heads of delegations of United Nations Member States: Yogeshwar Varma, Ambassador, Embassy of India to Mongolia, head of the Delegation of India; Akhtaruz Zaman Khan Kabir, Ministry of Commerce of Bangladesh; Anvar Ibrohimov, Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of Tajikistan; Juan Buffa, Deputy Permanent Representative of Paraguay to the United Nations; Prachanda Man Shrestha, Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies of Nepal; Popane Lebesa, Minister of Trade and Industry, Cooperatives and Marketing of Lesotho; Phineas Chivazve Chiota, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Industry and International Trade of Zimbabwe; Gjorgi Avramchev, Ambassador, Permanent Mission of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to the United Nations Office at Geneva; Enkhbold Voroshilov, Ministry of Industry and Trade of Mongolia; Siaosavath Savengsuksa, Vice-Minister, Ministry of Industry and Commerce of the Lao People's Democratic Republic; Yu Hong Yao, Ambassador, Embassy of China to Mongolia; Sonam P. Wangdi, Ministry of Trade and Industry of Bhutan; Rahmanova Anarkan, Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of Kyrgyzstan; Elmar Mammadov, Permanent Mission of Azerbaijan to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations at Geneva; Botshabelo Mafatlane, Ministry of Trade and Industry of Botswana; Fernande Houngbedji, Permanent Mission of Benin to the United Nations; Khalil Nasri, Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations at Geneva; Muhammad Ashraf Khan, Ministry of Commerce of Pakistan.

IV. Efforts of international and regional organizations to assist landlocked and transit developing countries in the area of international trade and trade facilitation

23. Presentations were made by representatives of the following international and regional bodies: Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States of the United Nations Secretariat; Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific; World Customs Organization; United Nations Development Programme; United Nations Conference on Trade and Development; African Union Commission;

World Bank; Asian Development Bank; International Road Transport Union; and Agency for International Trade Information and Cooperation.

V. Closing session

24. The Thematic Meeting adopted a Chairman's summary (see annex II).

Annex II to the letter dated 9 October 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Mongolia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Chairman's summary adopted at the Thematic Meeting on International Trade and Trade Facilitation

Introduction

1. In its resolution 61/212, the General Assembly decided to hold a midterm review of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action in 2008. The midterm review would be preceded by regional and substantive preparations in the most effective, well-structured and broad participatory manner. Also, intergovernmental mechanisms at the global and regional levels, including those of United Nations regional commissions, as well as relevant substantive material and statistical data, should be effectively utilized in the review process. The Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States was requested by the General Assembly to coordinate the preparatory process. The United Nations system organizations, including the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations regional commissions and relevant international and regional organizations were also requested, within their respective mandates, to provide necessary support to the review process.

2. The Almaty Programme of Action, adopted by the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation, held in Almaty in 2003, recognized that the marginalization of landlocked developing countries from the international trading system is due to high trade transaction costs. Excessive transport costs create a major barrier to foreign markets. The Almaty Programme of Action also noted the request of landlocked developing countries that the current negotiations on market access for agricultural and non-agricultural goods should consider giving particular attention to products of special interest to landlocked developing countries.

3. Inefficient border crossing and customs procedures, excessive documentation requirements and inadequate transport infrastructure, as well as costly bank transactions have been identified by the Almaty Programme of Action as major causes of higher trade transaction costs incurred by the landlocked developing countries. The dependence of landlocked developing countries on transit traffic systems in neighbouring countries makes them vulnerable to external process and highlights the need for bilateral and regional cooperation.

4. The Thematic Meeting on International Trade and Trade Facilitation was the second thematic meeting being organized in 2007 that provided substantive inputs to the midterm review by focusing on two of the five Almaty priorities. The first thematic meeting was held in Ouagadougou, from 18 to 20 June 2007, and focused on transit transport infrastructure development. The outcomes of these thematic meetings will serve as substantive inputs to the 2008 midterm review.

5. The Meeting brought together trade ministers and senior officials responsible for trade from landlocked and transit developing countries, representatives of donor countries, United Nations system organizations, international financial institutions and relevant regional and subregional organizations, with a view to reviewing and assessing the progress made in the implementation of priority 3 of the Almaty Programme of Action on international trade and trade facilitation. The Meeting also deliberated on future actions needed to enhance the participation of landlocked developing countries in the international trading system while further strengthening the global partnership for establishing efficient transit transport systems.

I. Assessment of current situation

6. While some progress, even if uneven, has been made since 2003, the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries continues to be marginalized from international trade in goods, thus preventing them from reaping the benefits of globalization and using trade as an instrument for achieving their development objectives. Over the past decade, the share of landlocked developing countries' exports in world trade has remained dismal, amounting to a share of 0.76 per cent for merchandise trade and 0.51 per cent for services trade in 2006. The recent increase in their share is due to the surge in commodity prices.

7. High trade transaction costs continue to be among the main causes, given landlocked developing countries' lack of access to the sea, remoteness and isolation from world markets, dependence on transit services and policies of their transit neighbours. High transport costs, compounded by delays, fees and obstacles owing to cumbersome customs procedures at additional border crossings and ports and other regulatory constraints, constitute the most important impediment to the equitable access to global markets and competition of landlocked developing countries with their trade partners. Trade costs increase prices in the domestic markets, erode competitiveness, thus restricting business from exporting abroad.

8. The World Trade Organization accession process for landlocked developing countries poses substantial challenges, both in terms of human capacity and the commitments sought from them. Only 22 out of 31 landlocked developing countries are members of the World Trade Organization at present. Except for Turkmenistan, the other eight landlocked developing countries are undertaking the long and complex process of negotiating their accession protocols to the World Trade Organization. These are the Governments of Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Bhutan, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Out of 34 transit developing countries, 30 are World Trade Organization members, with Viet Nam having acceded in January 2007. Algeria and the Islamic Republic of Iran are in the process of joining the Organization.

9. For the landlocked developing countries, the cost of moving goods across borders is a greater barrier than tariffs for their market access. According to the World Bank's *Doing Business 2007* report, only a quarter of the total delays are attributable to poor physical infrastructure. Pre-arrival documents, customs and inspections account for the bulk of the delays. The same report states that every day lost in transport delays is equivalent to a tax of about 0.5 per cent

10. On average, the time necessary to comply with all procedures required to export/import goods was 51.6 and 65.8 days respectively for landlocked developing

countries in 2006, while it amounted to 30.6 and 39.4 days respectively for the transit neighbours. Landlocked developing countries also required an excessive number of documents to export/import, namely 9.5 and 13.7 documents respectively, against 7.8 and 11.7 documents respectively in transit developing countries.

11. Though some progress has been registered by the landlocked developing countries since the Almaty Conference, a large number of bottlenecks related to trade facilitation are persisting, such as:

(a) Excessive number of documents required for export/import;

(b) Multiplication of scheduled and unscheduled roadblocks;

(c) Lack of adjacent border controls;

(d) Unnecessary customs convoy;

(e) Complicated and non-standardized procedures for customs clearance and inspections;

(f) Insufficient application of information and communications technology, leading to poor or total lack of computerization of customs procedures;

(g) Non-transparency of trade and customs laws, regulations and procedures, lack of institutional capacities and trained human resources;

(h) Underdeveloped logistics services, lack of interoperability of transport systems and absence of competition in the transit transport services sector;

(i) Slow progress in establishing and/or strengthening national trade and transport facilitation boards/committees;

(j) Low level of adherence to international conventions on transit transport.

12. Unpredictability in the supply chain of goods owing to the large economic distance from markets adversely affects the integration of landlocked developing countries in international trading networks, particularly in view of the increasing need of just-in-time deliveries by international investors.

13. All of the above underscores the crucial importance of trade and transport facilitation measures in landlocked and transit developing countries. With reduced time and cost of trade transactions, commercial operators could achieve much better competitiveness in the international markets. Transparent, simple and efficient import and export procedures are also attractive to foreign investment, especially when landlocked developing countries are involved in global production networks.

14. All 12 Asian landlocked developing countries are neighbours of dynamic economies, such as China, India and the Russian Federation, and have benefited from their growth. Measures should be taken to help the landlocked countries to land linking with the major economies in the region.

II. Efforts to accelerate the implementation of priority 3 of the Almaty Programme of Action, on international trade and trade facilitation

A. World Trade Organization trade negotiations and accession and regional trade agreements

15. Landlocked developing countries that are World Trade Organization members have been increasingly active in the context of the Doha Round of negotiations, engaging in the areas of greatest interest to the group, such as market access for agricultural and non-agricultural goods, including the cotton issue, special and differential treatment, other areas of negotiations and in particular trade facilitation, with the aim of encouraging the adoption of trade disciplines and decisions to deal with their special concerns and problems and facilitate their fuller integration into the world economy.

16. The Asunción Platform for the Doha Development Round, adopted at the Meeting of the Ministers responsible for trade of the landlocked developing countries, on 10 August 2005 in Asunción, continues to provide a common agenda for the landlocked developing countries in the Doha Round of trade negotiations.

17. As the essential step to a successful conclusion of the Doha Development Round, all World Trade Organization member States should engage in a constructive manner in the multilateral process with a view to agreeing to full modalities in agriculture and non-agricultural market access negotiations and achieving commensurate progress in other areas of the negotiations, in adherence to the development imperatives and commitments of the Doha Ministerial Declaration, the decision of the General Council of the World Trade Organization of 1 August 2004 and the Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration.

18. The special needs of landlocked developing countries should be taken into account, including through substantial reduction commitments on export products of particular interest to the landlocked developing countries and through seeking lesser reduction commitments from them in accordance with the principle of less than full reciprocity.

19. Special and differential treatment should be sought in all relevant negotiating areas, to ensure that landlocked developing countries benefit from greater flexibility to pursue those policy options that are most appropriate to accelerate their integration into the multilateral trading system.

20. The ongoing World Trade Organization negotiations on trade facilitation, if translated into an ambitious set of provisions as final outcome, could yield enormous benefits for both landlocked and transit developing countries, in terms of reducing the non-physical constraints to trade while decreasing the cost and time of commercial transactions.

21. In clarifying and improving relevant aspects of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade 1994 articles V on freedom of transit, article VIII on fees and formalities connected with import/export procedures and article X on publication and administration of trade regulations, the following objectives should be achieved:

(a) Strengthening and operationalization of article V obligations with a view to improving the access of landlocked developing countries to international markets through their transit neighbours, including through the application of national treatment on reciprocal basis to transit transport services;

(b) Simplification and harmonization of transit and trade-related laws and regulations which are made transparent in a prompt and accessible manner;

(c) Integration of special and differential treatment for landlocked developing countries as part of the clarification and improvement of articles V, VIII and X;

(d) Adoption of commitments which are commensurate with the capacity of landlocked and transit developing countries for implementation;

(e) Adoption of commitments by developed countries on the provision of technical assistance and capacity-building.

22. The provision of technical assistance and support for capacity-building to landlocked developing countries is crucial to enable them to fully participate in the negotiations and later for the implementation of the trade facilitation commitments.

23. The Meeting urged World Trade Organization members to desist from seeking commitments that were not commensurate with the level of development of acceding landlocked developing countries. The Meeting also expressed the position that all provisions on special and differential treatment included in the GATT and the World Trade Organization Agreements shall be granted to all acceding landlocked developing countries. Targeted technical assistance should be provided to the acceding landlocked developing countries during all stages of the process. Landlocked developing countries that are World Trade Organization members are encouraged to provide further support to acceding landlocked developing countries during the substantive discussions of their working parties.

24. The Ministerial Meeting of landlocked developing countries, held in Ulaanbaatar, on 28 and 29 August 2007, has adopted the "Ulaanbaatar Declaration", which reaffirms and clarifies the common positions of landlocked developing countries on a wide range of issues of interest within the context of the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations, in particular trade facilitation and transit transport.

25. Many regional trade agreements contain provisions favourable to transit trade, for example the Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement and the Southern Africa Development Community. Measures should be taken to promote and facilitate the accession of landlocked developing countries to such regional trade agreements.

B. Trade facilitation

26. Customs procedures must be simplified and harmonized. The introduction of a single customs document that reduces the data requirement to one single set and possibly uses e-commerce techniques is recommended. Information technology investment in this area could bring tangible benefits. The time spent on initiating transit or in final clearance can be drastically reduced through the computerization of transit documentation. The Meeting underscored the importance of the implementation of the revised Kyoto Convention of the World Customs Organization, which entered into force in February 2006. Landlocked and transit

developing countries should consider acceding to the revised Convention, if they have not done so.

27. Transparency is a high-priority goal that landlocked and transit developing countries must strive to achieve. All relevant information pertaining to customs law, customs formalities, other trade-related legal texts, administrative arrangements and requirements, including clearance procedures, must be made available and easily accessible.

28. The practice of customs convoy, or escort of goods in transit at the carrier's expense, should be drastically reduced or eliminated or applied only in special cases when such a measure is deemed to be indispensable. Necessary cost-effective measures that do not defeat the purpose of transit facilitation should be put in place to avoid diversion of goods in transit.

29. Customs reforms at the national and regional levels are a prerequisite for functional transit transport subregional systems. For landlocked developing countries cooperation across borders with the transit country or countries is crucial. Effective customs cooperation should start with simple measures such as harmonization of hours of operation of customs offices of neighbouring countries.

30. Cooperation with other border agencies is essential for the operation of an effective and expeditious clearance of goods at the border. From this standpoint, the establishment of coordinated and adjacent border control posts is very important and can go a long way in avoiding multiple inspections and reducing the time needed for border crossing procedures. A one-stop border is even more desirable.

31. Harmonization at the regional or subregional level of regulations concerning truck size and weight, third-party motor insurance, driver's license and other transit trade documentation should also be swiftly pursued.

32. Regional and subregional organizations in Africa, Asia and Latin America have been making serious efforts over the past years to develop trade and transit transport facilitation agreements aimed at easing the movement of goods across borders. Such agreements need to be effectively implemented. Especially in the cases where there are no compliance mechanisms, the political will of participating landlocked and transit developing country Governments must be strengthened. Interoperability of transport systems and resources and competition in the transport sector can also be beneficially enhanced.

33. At the same time, proliferation of rules and regulations in the area of transit transport in the same region should be avoided, since such proliferation leads to uncertainty and unnecessary multiplicity of forms and procedures, which result in undermining the desired objectives.

34. In the presentations made by the participating delegations, numerous examples of concrete actions taken or planned by the landlocked and transit developing countries to implement priority 3 of the Almaty Programme of Action were presented. These include:

(a) Improvement of the legal environment for foreign trade, international transportation and logistics services;

(b) Adoption of a legal, regulatory and institutional framework for private sector development (i.e., private investment law, banking legislation, licensing procedures);

(c) Elimination of non-tariff measures by the adoption of new laws and legislations;

(d) Establishment of a national committee on trade and transport facilitation, including ministries, Government agencies and the private sector, to provide coordinated solutions and decision-making;

(e) Engagement in the Doha negotiations on trade facilitation, with a particular focus on the clarification and improvement of GATT article V on transit;

(f) Enhanced use of information and communications technology for transparency in customs regulations and procedures;

(g) Harmonization of customs documents and procedures with transit neighbours towards creation of a "one-stop border";

(h) Compliance with the World Customs Organization revised Kyoto Convention;

(i) Implementation of the Single Window for import/export under United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business Recommendation No. 33;

(j) Provision of training courses on customs procedures and trade facilitation measures by transit developing countries to neighbouring landlocked developing countries;

(k) Provision of preferential tariff treatment;

(l) Harmonization, simplification and computerization of customs and border procedures;

(m) Accession or reactivation of TIR membership;

(n) Accession to the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks;

(o) Construction of bridges over rivers to create uninterrupted road networks without any river ferry to facilitate access to ports for landlocked countries through a transit neighbour.

35. Beyond the scope of the present Meeting were issues relating to the poor infrastructure quality in the majority of landlocked and transit developing countries. Investing in road infrastructure and maintenance is a high priority and extremely important to eliminate a significant source of unreliability of transport systems in landlocked and transit developing countries. Those issues were extensively tackled by the Ouagadougou Meeting, which adopted a Chairman's summary including priorities and recommendations for further action.

III. Support of the international community

36. In the context of the "Aid for trade" initiative, donor countries, United Nations system organizations, multilateral financial and development institutions, UNCTAD, United Nations regional commissions, the World Bank, the regional development

banks, the World Customs Organization and the World Trade Organization should continue to provide coordinated and coherent financial and technical assistance to landlocked and transit developing countries, in the form of grants or concessional loans, for the effective implementation of trade facilitation measures. Within that same context, attention should be given to the transit transport infrastructure needs of landlocked and transit developing countries.

37. In order to maximize the benefits derived from technical assistance and capacity-building programmes, enhanced cooperation among agencies and donors involved is key. Technical assistance should be targeted to address the trade-related supply-side constraints of landlocked developing countries, while building their human and institutional capacity to enable them to take advantage of trade opportunities.

38. Technical assistance, especially in the area of trade facilitation, should be demand-driven and take into account the differences in the level of development, economic and trade capacity, subregional integration and geographical location of the beneficiary landlocked and transit developing countries. Their ownership can be further strengthened through the active participation of the existing national transport and trade facilitation boards or committees. Where such boards or committees do not exist yet, landlocked developing countries are urged to establish one, involving all major stakeholders, including the private sector, in accordance with paragraph 37 of the Almaty Programme of Action. National trade and transport facilitation boards have a central role to play in assessing the needs for coordinated technical assistance in consultation with the participating agencies.

39. Considering the importance of an effective monitoring mechanism to measure progress in trade and transport facilitation towards the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, the indicators proposed by the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and the time/cost methodology developed by ESCAP are a welcome start and should be broadly used.

40. The Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States should strengthen its efforts to mobilize the support measures by the United Nations system organizations and other international organizations for the effective implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action. For the immediate future, the priority attention should be given to the effective preparation and successful organization of the 2008 midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action.

41. The outcome of the Meeting should be presented to the midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action as a substantive input. The outcome of the Meeting should also be issued as a document of the forthcoming sixty-second session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

42. The regional reviews in preparation for the midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action, scheduled to be held in Asia, Africa and Latin America in the first part of 2008, should be effectively organized, preferably within the annual sessions of the regional commissions. Landlocked and transit developing countries and their development partners are encouraged to attend the midterm review meeting in 2008 at the highest possible level of representation.

43. The Meeting expressed its profound appreciation to the authorities and the people of Mongolia, for hosting this event.

44. The Meeting also thanked the international and regional organizations for their support.

Annex III to the letter dated 9 October 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Mongolia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

List of participants at the Thematic Meeting on International Trade and Trade Facilitation

National delegations

Afghanistan

Azerbaijan

Bangladesh

Benin

Bhutan

Botswana

Burkina Faso

Burundi

Cameroon

Chad

China

Cuba

Czech Republic

Djibouti

Ethiopia

France

Germany

India

Japan

Kazakhstan

Kyrgyzstan

Lao People's Democratic Republic

Lesotho

Malawi

Mali

Mongolia

Nepal

Nigeria

Pakistan

Paraguay

Poland

Russian Federation

Rwanda

Swaziland

Switzerland

Tajikistan

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Turkey

Uganda

United States of America

Uzbekistan

Viet Nam

Zambia

Zimbabwe

United Nations system organizations

Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States of the United Nations Secretariat

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

United Nations Development Programme

International, regional and subregional organizations

African Union

Agency for International Trade Information and Cooperation

International Road Transport Union

World Trade Organization

International and regional development banks

World Bank

Asian Development Bank

Bilateral development cooperation agencies

German Agency for Technical Cooperation

Turkish International Development Cooperation Agency

United States Agency for International Development

United Nations A/C.2/62/5

General Assembly

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English
Original: French

Sixty-second session
Second Committee
Agenda item 57 (b)
Groups of countries in special situations: specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries: outcome of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation

Letter dated 5 October 2007 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Mali to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of the ministerial communiqué adopted by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries at their seventh annual ministerial meeting in New York on 28 September 2007 (see annex).

I would be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 57 (b).

(*Signed*) Ami **Diallo**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
Permanent Mission of the Republic of Mali to the United Nations

07-54312 (E) 181007 311007

Annex to the letter dated 5 October 2007 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Mali to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English]

Communiqué of the seventh Annual Ministerial Meeting of Landlocked Developing Countries

New York, 28 September 2007

We, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of landlocked developing countries, having met in New York, on 28 September 2007 in the sidelines of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly of the United Nations,

Expressing the concern that landlocked developing countries continue to be marginalized from international trade, thus preventing them from reaping the benefits of globalization and using trade as an instrument for achieving their development objectives, due to their lack of territorial access to the sea, remoteness and isolation from world markets, dependence on transit services and policies of their transit neighbours coupled with inadequate transit transport infrastructure facilities and cumbersome transit and border-crossing procedures,

Recalling the Almaty Declaration and the Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries,[1]

Recalling the United Nations Millennium Declaration, adopted on 8 September 2000,[2] in which Heads of State and Government recognized the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries and urged both bilateral and multilateral donors to increase financial and technical assistance to this group of countries to meet their particular development needs and to help them overcome the impediments of geography by improving their transit transport systems,

Recalling the outcome of the 2005 World Summit,[3] in which the special needs and challenges of landlocked developing countries were reaffirmed along with reiterated commitments of the world leaders to urgently address those challenges by effectively implementing the Almaty Programme of Action,

Recalling also the Asunción Platform for the Doha Development Round,[4] adopted at the Meeting of the Ministers of Landlocked Developing Countries Responsible for Trade, held in Asunción on 10 August 2005, and the Ulaanbaatar Declaration, adopted at the Meeting of the Ministers of Landlocked Developing Countries Responsible for Trade, held in Ulaanbaatar on 28 and 29 August 2007,

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[1] *Report of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 28-29 August 2003* (A/CONF.202/3), annexes I and II.

[2] See resolution 55/2.

[3] See resolution 60/1.

[4] A/60/308, annex.

Recalling further the ministerial declaration adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2007,[5] which called for the full, timely and effective achievement of the goals and targets of the Almaty Programme of Action to address the special needs of the landlocked developing countries,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 61/212 on the midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action,

Have adopted the following communiqué:

1. We re-emphasize that the effective integration of landlocked developing countries into the global economy and timely achievement of the Millennium Development Goals will be achieved through genuine partnerships between landlocked and transit developing countries and their development partners, as well as between public and private sectors, at the national, bilateral, subregional, regional and global levels and through full and effective implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action.

2. Landlocked developing countries are committed to continue implementing reforms addressing the given priorities of the Almaty Programme of Action while prioritizing the development of efficient transit transport systems within the national budget and overall economic development strategies. We are further dedicated to strengthening the commitment of national organizations for their full support and cooperation in the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action.

3. We continue to attach the utmost importance to the effective cooperation and collaboration with our transit neighbours, since landlocked developing countries depend on their transit facilities for access to and from the sea. Landlocked developing countries are strongly committed to work in close cooperation and coordination with our transit neighbours in the search of practical solutions to addressing special needs of landlocked developing countries. The importance of South-South cooperation was further emphasized as transit transport cooperation squarely falls under its purview. In this context, regional economic groupings and transit agreements, as well as bilateral agreements, play a critical role in promoting transit transport cooperation. We are committed to the effective implementation of these agreements.

4. We urge our development partners to provide greater financial assistance on a priority basis in the development of transit transport facilities, including completion of missing links to connect landlocked developing countries with the regional network, and in undertaking far-reaching trade facilitation measures to improve the efficiency of the use of existing transit facilities. Such assistance should be provided urgently, mostly in the form of grants and concessional assistance. We also urge the international community to accord greater market access and preferential treatment to exports of landlocked developing countries in order to mitigate the high trade transaction costs caused by their geographical handicaps. Special consideration should also be given to landlocked developing countries in the context of the aid for trade initiative and the negotiations on trade facilitation at the World Trade Organization.

5. We recognize that climate change presents daunting challenges for the socio-economic development of the landlocked developing countries. Landlocked

[5] A/62/3, chap. III, sect. C.

developing countries are particularly prone to desertification, drought and increased incidence of extremes in weather. We agree to have a coordinated position to reflect their concerns at the forthcoming international forums, such as the next United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Bali, Indonesia, in December 2007.

6. We emphasize the importance of the midterm review of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action. It is an important exercise to review the progress made so far in implementing its various provisions, the constraints encountered and the lessons learned in the past five years, as well as how the second half of the implementation period could be effectively utilized to advance on the ultimate goals to assist landlocked developing countries. The international community should therefore give particular importance to the process and ensure active participation.

7. We fully support the road map prepared and being implemented by the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, in close cooperation with the relevant United Nations organizations, as the overall organizational strategy for the timely preparation for the midterm review. We endorse the outcome of the thematic meeting on transit transport infrastructure development, held from 18 to 20 June 2007 in Ouagadougou, and the outcome of the thematic meeting on trade and trade facilitation, held on 30 and 31 August 2007 in Ulaanbaatar.

8. We emphasize the importance of the regional reviews on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, to be held in the first half of 2008. The existing intergovernmental mechanism of the United Nations regional commissions should be effectively utilized for this purpose. We encourage the landlocked developing countries, the transit developing countries and their development partners, as well as the relevant regional and subregional organizations and the regional development banks to actively participate in the regional review meetings. The relevant regional commissions are requested to provide necessary preparations for these meetings in close cooperation and collaboration with the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States.

9. We welcome the proposal made by the Government of Mongolia to set up an international think tank in Ulaanbaatar to enhance the analytical capability of landlocked developing countries, which is needed in order to maximize the efficiency of our coordinated efforts for the effective implementation of the internationally agreed provisions, particularly the Almaty Programme of Action and the Millennium Development Goals. To that end, the landlocked developing countries urge the international organizations and donor countries to assist them in achieving this endeavour.

10. Landlocked developing countries are committed to taking an active role in the preparatory meetings leading to the midterm review in 2008. The Governments of landlocked developing countries, transit developing countries and donor countries are invited to participate in the midterm review at a high political level. The midterm review should result in an action-oriented political commitment aimed at further galvanizing genuine partnerships among landlocked developing countries, transit developing countries and their development partners, as well as public-private sector partnership at the global, regional, bilateral and national levels to

facilitate efforts of landlocked developing countries in their effective participation in the world economy and the achievement of Millennium Development Goals.

11. The midterm review should be organized for two days during the plenary meeting of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly at the ministerial level. High-level parallel events, round-table meetings, announcements of important initiatives, commercial deals, the conclusion of international instruments and the demonstration of the use of information technology and best practices in trade facilitation should be organized during the midterm review to raise its profile.

12. Organizations of the United Nations system and other international organizations, particularly the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations regional commissions, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), regional development banks, the World Customs Organization, the World Bank and other international and regional organizations should make tangible contributions to the effective preparation for and organization of the midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action.

13. The Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, in accordance with the mandate given it by the General Assembly in its resolution 61/212, is requested to continue to provide necessary preparations for the midterm review and to coordinate and mobilize system-wide efforts within the United Nations for the successful organization of the review.

14. The Secretary-General of the United Nations is requested to undertake the necessary measures to provide the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States with the necessary resources to enable it to carry out its task related to the midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action and other related mandates given by the General Assembly.

United Nations A/C.2/62/6

General Assembly

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Sixty-second session
Second Committee
Agenda item 41
Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the Occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources

Letter dated 9 October 2007 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter that represents the position of the Syrian Arab Republic on the report entitled "Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan" which was prepared by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and issued as document A/62/75-E/2007/13, dated 3 May 2007, under item 11 of the agenda of the substantive session of 2007 of the Economic and Social Council, held at Geneva, and under item 43 of the preliminary list of items for the sixty-second session of the General Assembly.

I would greatly appreciate it if the present letter and its annex were circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 41, which has been allocated to the Second Committee.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Permanent Representative

07-55154 (E) 191007

Annex to the letter dated 9 October 2007 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General*

I have the duty to draw your kind attention, on behalf of my Government, to the following concerns, loopholes and facts regarding chapter III, dealing with the occupied Syrian Golan, of the report entitled "Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan":

1. Israel, the occupying power, has been practising a provocative policy under which it considers the occupied Syrian Golan "as an Israeli land" since 14 December 1981, following its decision to annex it, in contravention of international law and scores of relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolution 497 (1981).

2. The report mentions, in paragraph 69, the building of three new Israeli settlements, but it does not mention that this is in addition to the already existing 42 Israeli settlements that were built under the gaze of the international community on the wreckage of Syrian villages, farms and orchards in the occupied Syrian Golan.

3. The report mentions, in paragraph 69, that the Interior Minister of Israel announced the intention of Israel to facilitate accelerated settlement construction near the border with Syria, but the report does not state the fact that the construction will be near the ceasefire line.

4. Regarding the Israeli settlers, Israel brings settlers from the diaspora and provides them with loans as part of its policy to change the demographic character in the occupied Syrian Golan to create new facts on the ground.

5. It is not true, as mentioned in paragraph 70, that in June 2006 the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) opened an emergency and diagnostic medical centre in Majdal Shams and provided two ambulances; in this regard, we remind you that the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, held in Geneva in 2006, failed to address those promises.

6. Regarding paragraph 71, it should be mentioned that Israel imposes Israeli curriculum on Syrian citizens and that it runs the whole educational process in the occupied Syrian Golan.

7. With regard to the discussion of water in paragraph 72, there are other water resources such as Ran Lake near the village of Masa'ada. The lake was used by the Syrian population in farming and watering livestock. Currently, and after Israel controlled Ran Lake, it sells the water of the lake to the Syrians in the Golan at prices higher than those charged to Israeli settlers. In addition to that, Israel keeps digging wells for drinking and agriculture in the inhabited lands and properties of Syrian villages

* Text previously circulated under the symbol E/2007/88.

and sells their water to the Syrian population at higher prices. Furthermore, the Israeli occupying authorities prevent Syrians from drilling wells.

8. In paragraph 72, it is true that ICRC helped in transporting 10,000 tons of Arab-produced Golani apples to the Syrian market. However, those 10,000 tons were out of the total production of more than 55,000 tons.

9. There is no mention in the report of the issue of Syrian detainees, especially the deteriorating health situation of some Syrian detainees in Israeli jails, such as Seitan Nimr-elwaly.

10. There is also no mention in the report of the burial of Israeli nuclear waste in the occupied Syrian Golan. Syrian authorities raised this important matter many times in different forums such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.

11. The report omitted any reference to the effect of the threat of landmines on the Syrian population in the occupied Syrian Golan. Many Syrian nationals have paid with their lives because of these landmines.

12. The report did not mention the number of the Syrian Arab population in the Golan; nor did it mention the number of settlers in the occupied Syrian Golan.

The Syrian Arab Republic believes that future reports should not overlook these facts and should address them as long as they represent the reality on the ground.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative